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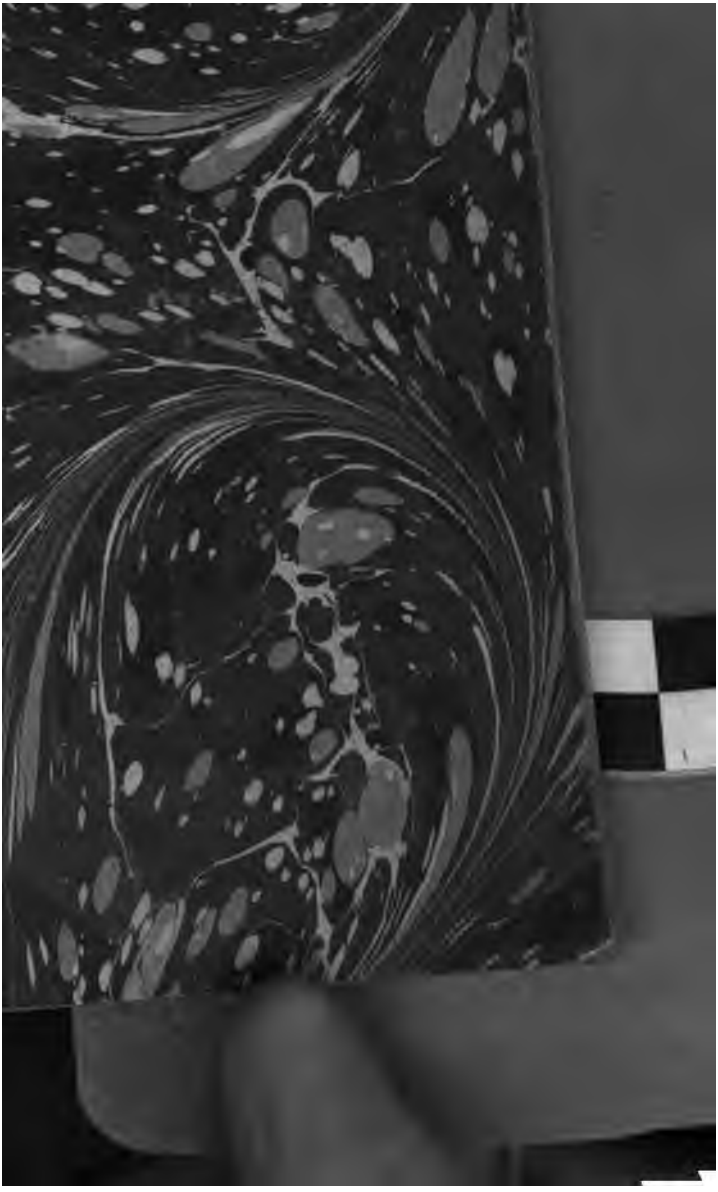

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La Fleur et la Feuille.

BIBLIOTECA

Comme ils avaient dépassé le berceau,
J'avançai donc, et vis sur sa monture
Très noble dame arrivant du préau
De blanc vêtue, elle avait, vous assure,
Air bien modeste et visage fort beau.
La saluant soudain de ma charmille
Dis : " Bonne chance ! "—" A vous merci, ma fille ! "

Page 47.

La Fleur et la Feuille :

POÈME

AVEC LE TEXTE ANGLAIS EN REGARD,

TRADUIT EN VERS FRANÇAIS

DE G. CHAUCER.

PAR

LE CHEVALIER DE CHATELAIN,

TRADUCTEUR DES " FABLES DE GAY."

" Ab jove principium hic eſt, incipe Camœnæ."

DEUXIÈME ÉDITION.

LONDON:

BASIL M. PICKERING, 196, PICCADILLY,

NEXT ST. JAMES'S CHURCH. (W.)

1857.

DEDICACE.

A MISS KEARSLEY.

U Grand Chaucer, de ce charmant conteur,
Vous qui savez goûter le vieux langage,
A vous je viens offrir la gente fleur
Qu'il fit fleurir sous si touffu feuillage
Que fleur et feuille ont encor leur fraîcheur.
Laissez la fleur ! . . Mais conservez la feuille
En souvenir de moi dans votre portefeuille.

LE CHEVALIER DE CHATELAIN.

TO MISS KEARSLEY.

OU who in gentle Chaucer take
delight,
And eke his rhymes with mimic
art portrayed,
To you I offer here the floweret bright
He caused to spring beneath the leafy shade :—
A flower and leaf methinks that ne'er will fade!
Yet lady, 'twixt the two might I decide,
Within your memory's herbal let the leaf abide!

Translated by LEOPOLD WRAY.

GEFFERY CHAUCER.

CHAUCER que l'on peut appeler à juste titre le père de la poësie anglaise, est né en 1328 et mort en 1400. Le poëme dont nous offrons aujourd'hui la traduction à nos lecteurs, est à notre avis du moins, une des plus gracieuses créations de son auteur. Nous donnons la version de Chaucer dans son vieux langage, parceque ce vieux langage est mille fois plus naïf que le langage modernisé, depuis Chaucer, quelquefois par des hommes d'un talent véritable. Inutile de dire que nous nous serions cru fort impertinent envers la mémoire du grand poëte, si nous eussions adopté la version de quelques uns de ses commentateurs, qui se sont égarés à plaisir en voulant expliquer ce qui nous a paru clair comme le jour.

En 1825 Edward Lord Thurlow a publié (imprimé par William Nicol, Cleveland Row, St. James's) *The Flower and the Leaf, after the famous poet Geoffrey Chaucer.* Nous croyons que le noble lord a été fort mal inspiré en reprenant ainsi Chaucer en sous-œuvre pour en faire un poëme à alinéas de toutes les grandeurs. Lord Thurlow s'est rendu coupable, selon nous, d'une pauvre contrefaçon de Chaucer, de ce poète original qu'il a privé par son fait, du charme indicible des strophes de sept vers dont le mètre est à la fois si original et si musicalement agréable.

Si l'on veut savoir le pourquoi de notre prédilection pour *The Floure and the Leafe*, nous dirons tout uniment que ce sujet nous a rappelé avec bonheur les naïves poësies de Clément Marot, qui peut être considéré lui comme le père de la poësie française.

LE TRADUCTEUR.

LA FLEUR ET LA FEUILLE

THE FLOURE AND THE LEAFE.

WRITTEN BY GEFFERY CHAUCER.

THE ARGUMENT.

A GENTLEWOMAN out of an arbour in a grove seeth a great company of knights and ladies in a dance upon the green grass, the which being ended they all kneel down and do honour to the daisie, some to the Flower and some to the Leaf; afterward this gentlewoman learneth by one of these ladies the meaning hereof, which is this; they which honour the Flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure, but they that honour the Leaf, which abideth with the root notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow virtue and during qualities, without regard of worldly respects.

WHEN that Phœbus his chair of
gold so hie [aloft,
Had whirlid up the sterrie sky
And in the Bole was entrid cer-
When shouris sote of rain descendid soft, [tainly,
Causing the ground felè timis and oft
Up for to give many an wholesome air,
And evèry plain was yclothid faire

LA FLEUR ET LA FEUILLE.

ARGUMENT.

UNE Damoiselle placée dans un berceau voit dans un bosquet une grande société de chevaliers et de dames dansant sur le gazon verdoyant, et la danse finie, ils s'agenouillent tous et rendent hommage à la pâquerette, qui à la fleur, qui à la feuille : après ce, la Damoiselle apprend de la bouche d'une des dames la signification de cette cérémonie, à savoir : que ceux qui honorent la fleur, chose fragile qui se flétrit à chaque coup de vent, sont gens qui recherchent la beauté et les plaisirs mondains, tandis que ceux qui honorent la feuille qui n'abandonne pas la racine en dépit des frimats et ouragans de l'hiver, sont ceux qui recherchent la vertu et ses qualités durables, sans égard aux vues mondaines.

LORSQUE Phœbus eut hissé son
char d'or
Jusqu'à l'azur au delà de la sphère,
Vers le taureau qu'il eut pris libre [essor,
Et que la pluie eut obligé la terre
Doucettement à se couvrir encor
De ce manteau de si fraiche verdure
Qui vient toujours remplacer la froidure ;

With newè grene, and makith smalè flours
To springin here and there in field and mede,
So very gode and wholesome be the shours,
That they renewin that was old and dede
In wintir time, and out of every sede
Springith the herbè, so that every wight
Of this seson wexith richt glade and light;

And I so gladè of the seson swete,
Was happid thus; upon a certain night
As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete
Was unto me, but why that I ne might
Rest I ne wist, for there n'as erthly wight
[As I suppose] had more of hertis ese
Than I, for I n'ad sicknesse nor disese;

Wherfore I mervaile gretly of my self
That I so long withoutin slepè lay,
And up I rose thre houris aftir twelfe,
About the springing of the gladsome day,
And on I put my gear and mine aray,
And to a plesaunt grove I gan to pas
Long or the bright sonnè uprisin was,

Que dans la plaine on vit petites fleurs
Lever la tête au souffle des ondées,
Rire au soleil au milieu de leurs pleurs,
D'air, de chaleur, toutes affriandées ;
Et que l'hiver en cessant ses rigueurs,
Soudainement eut laissé pousser l'herbe,
Et puis la joie au cœur du moins superbe ;

Que des douceurs, moi, de cette saison
En tapinois je savourais l'ivresse,
Certaine nuit, n'en dirai la raison,
Car ne la sais, vraiment je le confesse,
Que de dormir n'avais inclinaison,
Quand cependant (soit dit par parenthèse
Ne me sentais pas le moindre malaise) ;

Moult m'étonnant d'être ainsi sans sommeil,
N'ayant tourments d'esprit, de cœur, de tête,
De mon ennui prenant soudain conseil,
Après minuit, je me lève et m'apprête ;
Et bien avant le lever du soleil,
Bien que la nuit fut encor très obscure
M'acheminai vers bosquet de verdure.

In which were okis grete, streight as a line,
Undir the which the grass so freshe of hew
Was newly sprong, and an eight fote or nine
Evèry tre well fro his fellow grew,
With braunchis brode ladin with levis new,
That sprongin out agen the sonnè shene,
Some very rede, and some a glad light grene,

Which [as me thought] was a right plesaunt sight;
And eke the birdis songis for to here
Would have rejoisid any erthly wight,
And I, that couth not yet in no manere
Herin the nightingale of all the yere,
Full busily herk'nid with hert and ere
If I her voice perceve could any where:

And at the last a path of litil brede
I found, that gretly had not usid be,
For it forgrowin was with grass and wede,
That well unnethis a wight might it se;
Thought I, this path some whidir goth parde;
And so I followid till it me brought
To a right plesaunt herbir wel ywrought,

Dans ce bosquet étaient des chênes verts
Rangés en ordre,—on eut dit une armée ;
Un beau gazon poussait sous leurs couverts,
Moult s'étendait leur puissante ramée ;
Selon leur âge un feuillage divers
Les distinguait ; et la feuille nouvelle
Vers le soleil semblait faire la belle ;

Si doux aspect pour moi fut ravissant ;
Des gais oiseaux écouter le parlage
Est on ne peut pas plus divertissant ;
Moi qui brûlais d'entendre le ramage
Du Rossignol, et son tant doux accent,
Moi j'écoutai de toutes mes oreilles,
Et de sa voix je guettai les merveilles.

Puis à la fin j'apperçus un sentier
Vierge je crois des plus légères traces,
Car il était couvert en son entier
D'un fouillis d'herbe et de plantes rapaces,
Tant et si bien, et c'était singulier,
Qu'on ne pouvait en deviner la suite ;
" Par Dieu," me dis-je, " allons à ſa poursuite,

Which that benchid was, and with turfis new
Freshly turvid, whereof the grenè grass
So small, so thick, so short, so fresh of hew,
That most like to grene woll wot I it was;
The hegge also, that yedin in compas,
And closid in allè the grene herbere,
With sycamor was set and eglatere

Within, in fere so well and cunningly,
That every braunch and lefe grew by mesure
Plain as a bord, of an height by and by;
I se nevir a thing [I you ensure]
So well ydone, for he that toke the cure
It for to make [I trowe] did all his peine
To make it pass all tho that men have seine.

And shapin was this herbir rofe and all
As is a pretty parlour, and also
The hegge as thick as is a castil wall,
That who that list without to stond or go,
Thogh he wold all day pryin to and fro
He should not se if there were any wight
Within or no, but one within well might

Ce sentier là doit mener quelque part !"
Et j'arrivai tout-à-coup sous l'ombrage
D'un frais berceau fait avec beaucoup d'art ;
Le vert gazon de ce gentil bocage
Etait mignon, soyeux comme brocart ;
Beaux églantiers, et superbes platanes
Le dérobait aux regards des profanes.

Mais au dedans c'était prodigieux,
N'ai vu jamais aussi belle nature,
Arbres si beaux, surtout si plantureux,
Si bien rangés, aussi belle verdure ;
L'auteur sans doute avait fait de son mieux
Pour surpasser dans ce charmant bocage
Les agréments du plus bel héritage.

Et ce bosquet comme un gentil parloir
Etait fermé ; verte était la toiture ;
Comme les murs d'un antique manoir
La haie épaisse était en crenelure ;
Si qu'en dehors nul œil ne pouvait voir
Si dans la place il se trouvait un hère,
Mais en dedans on pouvait au contraire

Perceve all tho that yedin there without
Into the field, that was on every side
Cover'd with corn and grass, that out of doubt
Tho one would sekin all the worldè wide
So rich a feldè could not be espyde
Upon no cost, as of the quantity,
For of allè gode thing there was plenty.

And I, that all these plesaunt sightis se,
Thought suddainly I felt so swete an air
Of the eglenterè, that certainly
There is no hert [I deme] in such dispair,
Ne yet with thoughtis froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it should sone have bote
If it had onis felt this savour sote.

And as I stode and cast aside mine eye
I was ware of the fairist medler tre
That evir yet in all my life I se,
As full of blossomis as it might be,
Therein a Goldfinch leping pretily
From bough to bough, and as him list he ete
Here and there of buddis and flouris swete.

Appercevoir les passants au déhors
S'acheminant vers ces vastes prairies
D'herbe et de blé si couvertes alors,
Que l'on eut dit riches marqueteries,
En plein soleil étalant leurs trésors ;
Car tous ces champs, d'admirable apparence,
Etaient vraiment des greniers d'abondance.

Et tandis que toutes ces choses là
Si gentiment venaient charmer ma vue,
D'un églantier voisin, soudain voilà
Qu'en tous mes sens, l'odeur inattendue
Vint apporter un parfum au delà
De tout ce que peut rêver la pensée,
Un tel parfum doit être panacée

Pour tous les maux, pour toutes les douleurs ;
Pour lors jetant un regard en arrière,
J'étais debout, j'apperçus tout en fleurs
Un néflier d'une venue altière,
Et dans cet arbre humide des doux pleurs
De la rosée, errait de branche en branche,
Du néflier egrenant la fleur blanche,

And to the herbir side was adjoyning
This fairist tre of which I have you told,
And at the last the bird began to sing
[Whan he had etin what he etin would]
So passing swetely that by many fold
It was more plesaunt than I couth devise;
And whan his song was endid in this wise

The Nightingale with so mery a note
Answerid him, that alle the wode yrong
So sodainly, that as it were a sote
I stode astonied, and was with the song
Thorow ravishid, that till late and long
I ne wist in what place I was ne where,
Ayen methought she song e'en by mine ere:

Wherefore I waitid about busily
On evèry side if I her might se,
And at the last I gan full well aspy
Where she sate in a fresh grene laury tre,
On the furthir side evin right by me,
That gave so passing a delicious smell,
According to the eglantere full well;

Gentil oiseau, de nom Chardonneret,
Qui ne tarda de son tant doux ramage,
Alors qu'il eut mis fin à son banquet,
De délecter l'écho du voisinage
Tant et si bien que l'on eut fait le guet
Pour écouter sa chanson si jolie
Et que c'était pour le cœur chère-lie.

Quand il se tut, soudain le Rossignol
Lui répondit de sa voix pénétrante,
Et tout le bois séduit par son bémol
Retint son souffle, eut sa feuille béante ;
Et ne savais en entendant son sol,
Où moi j'étais ;—c'était une merveille
Qui me semblait chanter à mon oreille.

Voilà pourquoi vite je m'empressai
Pour le trouver, d'explorer toute chose
De tous côtés ; puis enfin j'avisai
Qu'il se tenait sur un beau laurier-rose,
D'où s'échappait son charmant virelai ;
Et du laurier l'odeur délicieuse
Se mariait à l'odeur doucereuse

Whereof I had so inly grete plesure,
As methought I surely ravishid was
Into Paradise, wherein my desire
Was for to be, and no ferthir to pas
As for that day, and on the sotè grass
I sat me down, for as for mine entent
The birdis song was more convenient

And more plesaunt to me by many fold
Than mete or drink, or any othir thing,
Thereto the herbir was so fresh and cold,
The wholsome savours eke so comforting,
That [as I demid] sith the beginning
Of the worldè was nevir seen er than
So plesaunt a ground of none erthly man.

And as I sat the birdis herkening thus
Methought that I herd voicis suddainly,
The most swetist and most delicious
That evir any wight I trow trewly
Herdin in ther life, for the armony
And swete accord was in so gode musike
That the voicis to angels most were like.

De l'églantier ; ce dont je ressentis
Plaisir si vif, si douce jouissance,
Que je me crus portée en paradis,
Et désirais dans cette circonstance
Y séjourner ;—ainsi donc je m'assis
Sur le gazon, pour pouvoir mieux entendre
Du Rossignol la complainte si tendre.

Cela m'était plus plaisant mille fois
Que de manger, et même que de boire ;
Car ce bosquet était tout à la fois
Un frais cellier, un charmant réfectoire,
Où s'aspirait l'arôme pur des bois ;
Et m'est avis qu'aucun fils de la terre
Ne vit jamais lieu si bien fait pour plaire.

Et comme ainsi j'écoutais les oiseaux
Je crus ouïr voix si délicieuses
Que nul jamais sous d'aussi verts rideaux
N'en entendit de plus harmonieuses
Executer de plus jolis morceaux ;
C'était si doux tous ces accords étranges,
Que l'on eut dit la musique des anges.

At the last out of a grove evin by
[That was right godely and plesaunt to sight]
I se where there came singing lustily
A world of ladies, but to tell aright
Ther beauty grete lyith not in my might,
Ne ther array; nevirthèless I shall
Tell you a part, tho' I speke not of all:

The furcots white of velvet well fitting
They werin clad, and the semis eche one,
As it werin a mannir garnishing,
Was set with emeraudis one and one
By and by, but many a richè stone
Was set on the pursilis out of dout
Of collours, sleves, and trainis, round about;

As of grete perlis round and orient,
And diamondis fine and rubys red,
And many othir stone of which I went
The namis now; and everich on her hede
A rich fret of gold, which withoutin drede
Was full of statèly rich stonys set,
And evèry lady had a chapelet

Enfin sortant d'un bosquet tout voisin,
Fort bon à voir, pour ça je vous l'assure,
Je vis chantant de dames un essaim,
Mais pour vous dire et leur gente figure,
Et leur beauté, de leur teint le carmin,
Leurs beaux habits et leur rare élégance
Ne le saurais, n'en ai pas la puissance.

Mais malgré ce, vous dirai toutefois
Que d'un surcot elles étaient vêtues,
Surcot fort riche, et d'étoffe de choix,
Le long duquel se trouvaient appendues
En ornements, des perles, qui parfois
Autour du cou se courbaient comme gerbes ;
Aussi parfois émeraudes superbes,

Ou bien encor superbes diamants
Etincelaient sur toutes les coutures ;
Ou bien encor des rubis rougissants
Faisaient briller toutes les entournures ;
Un cercle d'or sur leurs cheveux luisants
Eblouissait ainsi qu'une girande,
Et chaque dame avait une guirlande,

On ther hedis of braunchis fresh and grene,
So wele ywrought, and so marvelously,
That it was a right noble sight to sene,
Some of laurir, and some full plesauntly
Had chapèlets of wodebind, and sadly
Some of agnus castus werin also,
Chaplets fresh; but there were many of tho

That dauncid and eke song full sobirly,
But all they yede in maner of compace;
But one there yede in mid the company
Sole by herself; but all follow'd the pace
That she kept, whose hevinly figured face
So plesaunt was, and her wele shape person,
That of beauty she past them everichone,

And more richly beseen by manyfold
She was also in every manir thing;
Upon her hede full plesaunt to behold
A coron of gold rich for any king,
A braunch of agnus castus eke bering
In her hand, and to my sight trewily
She lady was of all the company;

Très noblement qui lui ceignait le front,
Soit de laurier ou soit de chevrefeuille,
D'agnus-castus, symbole pudibond
De chasteté, soit même de la feuille
De l'arbre altier qui pousse sur le mont ;
Dans cet essaim de nobles damoiselles
Il s'en trouvait beaucoup et des plus belles,

Dansant, chantant, foulant candidement
D'un pied léger la naissante verdure ;
Elles suivaient religieusement
Beauté sublime à céleste figure
Qui se tenait toute seulettement
Au beau milieu du cercle, d'aventure,
Et gentiment qui marquait la mesure.

Sa taille était si bien prise, son port
Majestueux si rempli de noblesse,
Si gracieux était son doux abord,
Ses vêtements de si grande richesse,
Que l'on pouvait juger sans nul effort
Que sa beauté lui donnait droit de reine,
Et que des cœurs elle était souveraine.

And she began a roundell lustily
That *Sus le foyle de vert moy* men call
Sine & mon joly cœur est endormy,
And than the company answerid all
With voicis swete entunid and so small
That methought it the swetist melody
That evir I herd in my life sothly.

And thus they all came dauncing and singing
Into the middis of the mede echone
Before the herbir where I was sitting,
And God wot I thought I was well bigone,
For than I might avise them one by one
Who fairist was, who best could dance or sing,
Or who most womanly was in all thing.

They had not dauncid but a little throw
When that I herd not fer of sodainly
So grete a noise of thundering trumpis blow
As though it should have departid the skie,
And aftir that within a while I sie
From the same grove where the ladies came out
Of men of armis coming such a rout

D'agnus-castus elle tenait en main
Branche modeste—et d'une voix divine
Elle entonna gai rondelet soudain
Sur l'air connu : " Sous la blanche aubépine
Mon tendre cœur aime à rêver d'hymen."
Et puis en chœur doucement chaque belle
Disait bien bas, bien bas la ritournelle,

Si que c'était un concert ravissant :
Vinrent ainsi toutes dans la prairie
Près de l'endroit où j'étais me tenant,
Et Dieu le sait si de leur braverie
Je pouvais voir le spectacle émouvant ;
Si pouvais voir qu'elle était la plus belle
Ou mieux dansait soit dame ou jouvencelle.

Elles n'avaient dansé qu'un tantinet
Quand j'entendis un grand bruit de trompettes
Tombant du ciel, s'élancer du bosquet
Duquel sortaient ces brunes et blondettes,
Et puis bientôt je vis, et tout d'un trait
De chevaliers s'avancer un cortège
Si long, si long que par un sortilège

As all men on erth had ben assemblid,
On that place well horsid for the nonis,
Stering so fast that all the erth tremblid;
But for to speke of richis and stonis,
And men and horse, I trow the large wonis
Of Pretir John, ne all his tresory,
Might not unneth have bought the tenth party.

Of their array whoso list to here more
I shall reherse so as I can a lite.
Out of the grove that I speke of before
I se come first, all in their clokis white,
A company that wore for ther delite
Chapèlets fresh of okis serial
But newly sprong, and trumpets were they all;

On every trump hanging a brode bannere
Of fine tartarium, full richly bete,
Every trumpet his lord'is armis bere
About ther neckis, with grete perlis sete,
Collaris brode, for cost they wou'd not lete,
As it would seem, for ther scochons echone
Were set about with many a precious stone;

Il eut semblé que du vaste univers
Venaient ici des confins de la sphère,
Si bien montés, tous ces hommes divers
Qui chevauchaient faisaient trembler la terre,
Et du sol même arrachaient des éclairs :
Si riche était cette cavalerie
Que prêtre Jean de sa trésorerie

Eut épuisé l'argent bien vainement
Pour l'acheter, et fut mort à la peine ;
Rien d'aussi beau que leur ajustement,
Où le brocart se jouait sur la laine ;
Je vis d'abord s'avancer noblement
En éclaireurs grand nombre de trompettes,
Aux blancs manteaux, aux riches aiguillettes,

De chêne vert ayant guirlande au front ;
Des instruments pendait une bannière
Brodée à Tars sur un merveilleux fond ;
Chaque homme avait, les portant en équerre
Autour du cou, sur un écusson rond
De son seigneur les riches armoiries,
Nobles joyaux ornés de pierreries ;

Ther horsis harneis was all white also;
And aftir them next in one company
Camin kingis at armis and no mo,
In clokis of white cloth with gold richly,
Chaplets of grene on their heds on hye,
The crownis that they on their scotchons bere
Were set with perl, and ruby, and saphere,

And eke grete diamondis many one;
But all ther horse harneis and other gere
Was in a sute according everichone,
As ye have herd the forsaid trumpets were,
And by seming they were nothing to lere,
And ther guiding they did so manirly;
And aftir them came a grete company

Of heraudis and pursevauntis eke,
Arrayid in clothis of white velvet,
And hardily they were nothing to seke
How they on them shouldin the harneis set,
And every man had on a chapèlet,
Scotchonis and eke horse harneis in dede
They had in sute of them that 'fore them yede.

Tous les coursiers avaient de blancs harnais ;
Après cela parurent des rois-d'armes,
Et rien que ça, portant manteaux épais
De beau drap blanc, tous ornés de leurs armes ;
Liseré d'or admirablement frais
Les entourait, et des guirlandes vertes
Ceignaient leur front ; on ne vit jamais certes

Plus de rubis que sur les écussons
Où de chacun se trouvait la couronne ;
Gros diamants sur les caparaçons
Brillaient aussi sans offusquer personne :
D'argent massif étaient tous les arçons,
Bref rien d'égal à ces nobles armures
Que la tenue et les mâles figures

De ces guerriers. On voyait après eux
De blanc vêtus, Hérauts, poursuivants d'armes,
A l'air superbe, au maintien belliqueux,
Ils étaient faits pour sécher bien des larmes ;
Une guirlande ornait leur front fougueux,
Noble écusson, cavale magnifique
Faisaient d'eux tous un assemblage unique.

Next after these appere in armour bright,
All save their hedis, semely knightis nine,
And every clasp and nail, as to my sight,
Of ther harneis were of red gold so fine,
With cloth of gold, and furrid with ermine,
Were the tappouris of their stedis strong,
Both wide and large, that to the ground did hong;

And every boss of bridle and paitrel
That they had on was worth, as I would wene,
A thousand pound; and on ther hedis well
Dressid were crounis of the laurir grene,
The best ymade that evir I had sene;
And every knight had aftir him riding
Thre henchmen, still upon him awaiting;

Of which every (first) on a short trunchon
His lord'is helmet bore so richly dight
That the worst of them was worth the ransoune
Of any king; the second a shield bright
Bare at his back; the thred barin upright
A mighty spere, full sharp yground and kene,
And evèry child ware of levis grene

Après ceux-ci venaient neuf chevaliers
Bardés de fer, et de belle prestance,
Et chaque agrafe et clou de leurs cimiers
Etaient d'or pur selon toute apparence ;
Un beau drap d'or de leurs nobles coursiers
Cachait les flancs, ce drap doublé d'ermine
Etait si long qu'il couvrait leur poitrine.

Les ornements du mords et du poitrail
Devaient valoir des sommes fabuleuses ;
Le casque était d'un superbe travail,
De verts lauriers des branches plantureuses
L'environnant en rehaussaient l'émail ;
Ces chevaliers avaient, selon l'usage,
Qui chevauchaient derrière eux en voyage

Trois écuyers. Or le premier des trois
De son seigneur portait le noble heaume,
Dont le moins riche eut valu toutefois
Rançon de prince, ou rançon de royaume ;
L'autre portait sur son dos le pavois,
Quant au troisième il portait une lance
Puissante pour l'attaque et la défense,

A fresh chap'let upon his hairis bright;
And clokis white of fine velvet they were,
Ther stedis trappid and arayid right,
Without difference as ther lordis were;
And aftir them on many' a fresh coursere
There came of armid knightis such a rout
That they besprad the large field about;

And all they werin, aftir ther degrees,
Chappèlets new, or made of laurir grene,
Or some of oke, or some of othir trees,
Some in ther hondis barin boughis shene,
Some of laurir, and some of okis bene,
Some of hawthorne, and some of the wodebind,
And many mo which I have not in mind.

And so they came ther horse freshly stirring
With bloudy sownis of ther trompis loud;
There se I many' an uncouth disguising
In the array of thilkè knightis proud;
And at the last as evenly as they coud
They toke ther place in middis of the mede,
And every knight turnid his horsis hede

Et tous les trois avaient sur leurs cheveux
Feuillage vert en forme de guirlande,
Tous ils portaient manteaux avantageux
De velours blanc, pour eux faits de commande ;
Leurs destriers nés d'un sang généreux
Se pavanaient de leur magnificence ;
Puis après eux, à très peu de distance

Venaient en foule et sur maints frais coursiers
De chevaliers une immense cohue,
Portant chacun de chênes, de lauriers
Selon son rang et selon sa tenue,
Une guirlande ; ou rameaux d'oliviers,
De chevrefeuille, ou de blanche aubépine
Ou bien encor d'arbre porte-résine.

Alors au son des belliqueux clairons
Tous d'accourir dans la vaste prairie,
Et tous alors faisant force éperons
De se ranger en longue galerie,
Et je vis là parmi ces escadrons
Des chevaliers d'une étrange figure . . .
Mais voilà que chacun de sa monture

To his felow, and lightly laid a spere
Into the rest, and so justis began
On ev'ry part aboutin here and there;
Some brake his spere, some threw down horse and [man,
About the felde astray the stedis ran;
And to behold their rule and govirnaunce
I you ensure it was a grete plesaunce.

And so the justis last an hour and more,
But tho that crownid were in laurir grene
Did win the prise; their dintis were so sore
That there was none agenst them might sustene,
And the justing allè was left off clene;
And fro ther horse the nine alight anon,
And so did all the remnaunt everichone,

And forth they yede togidir twain and twain,
That to behold it was a worthy sight,
Toward the ladies on the grenè plain,
That song and dauncid, as I said now right;
The ladies as sone as they godely might
They brakin off both the song and the daunce,
And yede to mete them with full glad semblaunce:

Fait volte face, et la lance en arrêt
Sur son voisin fond soudain—lors la joûte
De commencer—L'un fait sauter l'armet,
L'autre la lance, ou bien coûte que coûte
Poursuit son homme et bientôt le soumet ;
C'était plaisir que de voir je vous jure,
Dans la prairie errer à l'aventure

Battants, battus ;—Pendant une heure et plus
Dura la joûte ;—enfin de cette lutte
Ceux qui portaient verts lauriers pour écus
Eurent la gloire, et cela sans dispute,
De leurs rivaux ayant fait des vaincus.
Alors les neuf de mettre pied à terre,
Ce qui fut fait par l'assemblée entière.

Ils viennent tous ensemble deux à deux,
C'était à voir, à l'encontre des dames,
Qui sur le pré chantaient lais amoureux
Et gentiment laissaient couler leurs gammes ;
Elles soudain de cesser danse et jeux
Et d'un air doux et tout-à-fait affable
Au devant d'eux d'aller à l'amiable :

And every lady toke full womanly
By the hond a knight, and so forth they yede
Unto a faire laurir that stode fast by,
With levis laid, the boughis of grete brede,
And to my dome ther nevir was indede
A man that had sene half so faire a tre,
For undirneth it there might well have be

An hundrid persons at ther own plesaunce
Shadowid fro the hete of Phœbus bright,
So that they shouldin have felt no grevaunce
Neithir for rain, ne haile, that them hurt might;
The savour eke rejoice would any wight
That had be sick or melancholious,
It was so very gode and vertuous.

And with grete rev'rence they enclinid low
Unto the tre so sote and fair of hew,
And aftir that within a litil throw
They all began to sing and daunce of new;
Some song of love, some plaining of untrew,
Environing the tre that stode upright,
And evir yede a lady and a knight.

Et chaque dame à chaque chevalier
Offrit la main d'une façon accorte,
Et furent tous vers un très beau laurier
Qui près de là poussait sa sève forte,
Jamais ne vis un arbre plus altier,
Immense était son immense envergure
Et sous son ombre et sa vaste ceinture

Cent abrités selon leur bon plaisir
Eussent tenu, pouvant braver l'atteinte
De la chaleur, de la pluie à venir ;
Et respirer tranquillement sans crainte
D'être troublés, le parfum du zéphir
Tout impregné de la fleur demi-close
Qui pullulait sur le beau laurier-rose.

Arrivés là, tous avec grand respect
S'inclinent vers l'arbre beau de nuance,
Et puis après charmés de son aspect,
Tous de chanter, de reprendre la danse,
Les uns chantaient qui l'amour circonspect,
Qui l'amour vif, qui sur leurs infidèles
Se lamentaient ; et chevaliers et belles

And at the last I cast mine eie aside,
And was ware of a lusty company
That came roming out of the feldè wide,
And hond in hond a knight and a lady,
The ladies all in surcotes, that richly
Purfilid were with many a rich stone,
And every knight of grene ware mantlis on,

Embroudid wele, so as the surcots were,
And everich had a chapelet on her hed,
[Which did right wele upon the shining here]
Makid of godely flouris white and red,
The knightis eke that they in hondè led
In sute of them ware chaplets everichone,
And before them went minstrels many one,

As harpis, pipis, lutis, and sautry,
Allè in grene, and on ther hedis bare
Of diverse flouris made full craftily,
All in a sute, godely chaplets they ware,
And so dauncing into the mede they fare,
In mid the which they found a tuft that was
All ovirsprad with flouris in compas,

Entouraient l'arbre, et toujours deux à deux
Allaient ensemble ; alors de la prairie
Je vis venir un groupe fort nombreux
De chevaliers, de dames, en série,
Marchant par couple, et devisant entr'eux :
Riche surcot brodé, de chaque dame
Etait la mise ; et selon le programme

Les chevaliers portaient un manteau vert ;
Une guirlande en fleurs et des plus belles
Se prélassait sur le front découvert
De chaque dame, aussi des jouvencelles ;
Les chevaliers eux-mêmes, de concert
Sur leur front mâle avaient une guirlande
A l'avenant ; devant eux une bande

De ménestrels et de gais troubadours
Vêtus de vert, marchait, et sur leurs têtes
Etaient ces fleurs qu'eux ils chantent toujours,
Et qui toujours sont l'ornement des fêtes,
Des nobles jeux, des tournois, et des cours :
Lors en dansant au milieu de la plaine
Ils vont, puis là, tous de faire la chaîne

Whereto they enclinid evèrichone
With grete revèrence, and that full humbly;
And at the last there tho began anon
A lady for to sing right womanly
A bargaret in praising the daisie,
For (as methought) among her notis swete
She said *Si douce est la Margarete!*

Then they allè answerid her in fere
So passingly well and so plesauntly,
That it was a most blisfull noise to here;
But I n'ot how it happid, sodainly
As about none the sonn so fervently
Waxe hotè that the pretty tendir floures
Had lost the beauty of their fresh collours.

Forshronke with hete the ladies eke to brent,
That they ne wist where they them might bestow,
The knightis swelt, for lack of shade nie shent,
And aftir that within a litil throw
The wind began so sturdily to blow
That down goth all the flowris everichone,
So that in all the mede there laft not one,

Autour d'un tertre éblouissant de fleurs,
Puis inclinant, et chacun et chacune
Moult humblement, leurs têtes et leurs cœurs,
Avec respect ;—parmi les dames une
Se détacha ; lors pour toutes ses sœurs
Elle chanta lai nommé Bergerette
Disant ainsi : "*Douce est la Margarete !*"

Toutes alors de répondre à la fois :
" Honneur à toi, gentille pâquerette !"
De ces accents naissaient si doux émois
Que l'on eut dit le chant de l'alouette :
Mais vers midi Phœbus de son carquois
Laissa tomber soudain flèche sur flèche ;
Ce qui fit que la terre devint sèche.

Aussi soudain se flétrirent les fleurs
Naguère encor si fraiches et si belles ;
Puis il advint, vu les grandes chaleurs
Que chevaliers, dames et jouvencelles,
Ne pouvaient plus résister aux langueurs
De l'air brûlant—mais lors un vent d'orage
Des pauvres fleurs vint faire affreux carnage.

Save such as succoured were among the leves
Fro every storme that mightè them assaile,
Growing undir the heggis and thick greves;
And aftir that there came a storme of haile
And rain in fere, so that withoutin faile
The ladies ne the knightis n'ade o' thred
Dry on them, so dropping wet was ther wede.

And when the storme was clene passid away
Tho in the white, that stode undir the tre,
They felt nothing of all the grete affray
That they in grene without had in ybe;
To them they yedē for routh and for pite,
Them to comfort aftir their grete disese,
So fain they were the helplesse for to ese.

Than I was ware how one of them in grene
Had on a coron rich and well-fitting,
Wherfore I demid well she was a quene,
And tho in grene on her were awaiting;
The ladies then in white that were coming
Towardis them, and the knightis in fere,
Began to comfort them and make them chere.

Et n'en resta pas une sur le pré;
Les seules fleurs à l'abri d'un feuillage
Sous les bosquets, échappèrent malgré;
Et puis après pluie et grêle en leur rage
Vinrent tomber, si que tout affaré
Chacun courait, chevalier, noble dame,
Chercher refuge, et que par Notre-Dame!

Onc n'en trouvait—Ce qui fit que chacun
Fut fort mouillé. Pourtant après l'orage
Vint le beau temps; ceux qui tous en commun
Vêtus de blanc s'étaient sous le feuillage
Du beau laurier tenus temps opportun,
Vinrent alors, et ce, par bonté pure
Vers les mouillés, dans leur déconfiture.

Tous ces mouillés étaient vêtus de vert:
Or, j'avisai dame portant couronne
Au milieu d'eux, elle avait l'air ouvert,
Et c'était bien la plus belle personne!
D'où sans effort eus bientôt découvert
Qu'elle était reine, et m'apperçus de suite
Que tous les verts s'empressaient à sa suite.

The quene in white, that was of grete beauty,
Toke by the honde the quene that was in grene,
And seidè, Sustir, I have grete pity
Of your annoy and of your troublous tene
Wherein ye and your company have bene
So long, alas! and if that it you plese
To go with me I shall do you the ese

In all the plesure that I can or may;
Whereof that othir, humbly as she might,
Thankid her, for in right evil array
She was with storme and hete I you behight;
And evèry lady then anon right
That were in white one of them toke in grene
By the hond, which when the knightis had sene

In like manir eche of them toke a knight
Clad in the grene, and forth with them they fare
To an heggè, where that they anon right
To makin these justis they would not spare
Boughis to hew down and eke trees to square,
Wherewith they made them stately firis grete
To dry ther clothis, that were wringing wete:

Or, je l'ai dit, les blancs allaient vers eux,
Incontinent, pour leur porter en masse
De leur pitié les accents généreux
Et sympathie, et secours efficace :
La reine en blanc donc d'un air gracieux
Prit par la main des verts la gente reine
Et lui dit : " Sœur, croyez-le, j'ai grand' peine

De votre ennui, de l'affreux accident
De vos amis ; si cela peut vous plaire
Chez moi venez, aurez de l'agrément,
Et ce qui peut vous être nécessaire."
La reine verte, alors très humblement
A dit : " J'accepte ;" et chaque dame blanche
A chaque dame en vert, de façon franche

Donna la main, et chaque chevalier
Vêtu de blanc à l'avenant fut prendre
Un des mouillés, et tous vers le hallier
Où le matin avait eu lieu l'esclandre
De leurs combats, furent se rallier.
Et tous les blancs n'épargnaient pas leur peine
Pour couper ras troncs d'arbres par douzaine,

And aftir that of herbis that there grew
They made for blistirs of the sonne brenning
Ointmentis very gode, wholsome and new,
Where that they yede the sick fast anointing;
And aftir that they yede about gadring
Plesant saladis, which they made them ete
For to refreshe ther grete unkindly hete.

The lady of the Lefè then gan to pray
Her of the Floure [for so to my seming
They should be callid as by ther array]
To soupe with her, and eke for any thing
That she should with her all her pepill bringe,
And she ayen in right godely manere
Thankith her fast of her most frendly chere,

Saying plainèly that she would obay
With all her hert all her commandèment;
And then anon without lengir delay
The lady of the Lefe hath one ysent
To bring a palfray aftir her intent,
Arrayid wele in fair harneis of gold,
For nothing lackid that to him long shold:

Avec lesquels ils leur firent des feux
Pour les sécher ; et puis avec des herbes
De composer un onguent merveilleux
Pour soulager les blessures acerbes
Que le soleil avait fait à ces preux :
Et puis enfin pendant la régalade
Eurent pour eux des cressons en salade.

Ce fut alors que la dame à la fleur
Reçut avis de la dame à la feuille
(Car il est temps, n'est ce pas, cher lecteur,
De faire enfin sortir du portefeuille
Chacun des noms de ces reines du cœur ?)
De venir elle et sa nombreuse suite
A son souper—" A ce desir, de suite

J'obéirai," dit la dame à la fleur,
Un tel plaisir volontiers je le cueille :
Incontinent un chevalier d'honneur
Fut envoyé par la dame à la feuille
Pour amener et sans plus de lenteur
Un palefroi de superbe apparence,
Et puis chevaux pour toute l'assistance.

And aftir that to all her company
She made to purvey horse and every thing
That they nedid, and then full hastily
Even by the herbir where I was sitting
They passid all, so merrily singing
That it would have comfortid any wight:
But then I se a passing wondir sight,

For then the Nightingale, that all the day
Had in the laurir sete, and did her might
The whole service to sing longing to May,
All sodainly began to take her flight,
And to the lady of the Lefe forthright
She flew, and set her on her hand softly,
Which was a thing I mervail'd at gretly.

The Goldfinch eke, that fro the medlar tre
Was fled for hete unto the bushis cold,
Unto the lady of the Flowre gan fle,
And on her hond he set him as he wold,
And plesauntly his wingis gan to fold,
And for to sing they peine them both as sore
As they had do of all the day before.

Tous à cheval vinrent rapidement
Près de l'endroit où me tenais assise,
En chevauchant et chantant si gaiment
Si jolis lais empreints de vaillantise,
Qu'à les ouïr j'avais de l'agrément,
Et ressentais émotion heureuse ;
Mais lors je vis chose bien merveilleuse :

Le Rossignol qui tout le long du jour
Avait chanté son lai d'amour si tendre
Dans le berceau, vite de ce séjour
Partit d'un vol, et ce, pour aller prendre
Incontinent position autour
Des jolis doigts de la dame à la feuille ;
Arrivé là, soudain il se recueille.

Pendant ce temps le tout gentil causeur,
Du néflier habitant solitaire,
S'en fut voler vers la dame à la fleur
Et sur sa main mit sa patte légère :
Puis repliant son aile avec bonheur,
Au Rossignol il donna la replique,
Et tous les deux de chanter leur cantique.

And so these ladies rode forth a grete pace,
And all the rout of knightis eke in fere;
And I that had sene all this wondir case
Thought that I would assay in some manere
To know fully the trouth of this mattere,
And what they were that rode so plesauntly:
And when they were the herbir passid by

I drest me forth, and happid mete anon
A right fair lady, I do you ensure,
And she came riding by her self alone,
Allè in white, with semblaunce full demure;
I her salued, bad her gode avinture
Mote her befall, as I coud most humbly,
And she answered, My doughtir, gramercy!

Madame, quoth I, if that I durst enquere
Of you, I wold fain of that company
Wit what they be that passed by this harbere.
And she ayen answerid right frendly,
My doughtir, all tho that passid hereby
In white clothing be servants everichone
Unto the Lefe, and I my self am one.

Voilà chacun chevauchant vitement
Et verts et blancs, dames et damoiselles,
Et chevaliers, tous agréablement
En devisant de langue et de prunelles,
Et moi témoin dès le commencement
De tous ces faits je désirais connaître
Et bien à fond, ce que ce pouvait être.

Comme ils avaient dépassé le berceau,
J'avançai donc, et vis sur sa monture
Très noble dame arrivant du préau
De blanc vêtue, elle avait, vous assure,
Air bien modeste et visage fort beau.
La saluant soudain de ma charmille
Dis : " Bonne chance !"—"A vous merci, ma fille,"

Répondit-elle,—Et moi d'ajouter lors :
" Puis-je de vous savoir, ô noble Dame !
Quels sont ces gens si vifs en leurs transports
Dont viens de voir un si grand amalgame ?"—
" Ceux qui, ma fille, ont passé sur ces bords
Vêtus de blanc, comme moi de la feuille
Sont les servants que notre reine accueille.

Se ye not her that crownid is (quod she)
Allè in white? Madame, then quod I, Yes.
That is Dian, goddess of Chastity,
And for bicause that she a maidin is
Into her hond the branch she berith this
That agnus castus men call propirly;
And all the ladies in her company

Which ye se of that herbè chaplets were
Be such as han alwey kept maidinhede,
And all they that of laurir chaplets bere
Be such as hardy were in manly dede,
Victorious, name which nevir may be dede,
And all they were so worthy of ther honde
In their time that no one might them withstonde;

And tho that were chapèlets on ther hede
Of fresh wodebind be such as nevir were
To Love untrue in word, in thought, ne dede,
But ay stedfast, ne for plesance ne fere,
Tho that they shulde ther hertis all to tere,
Woud never flit, but evir were stedfast
Till that ther livis there assundir brast.

Voyez-vous point une dame là bas
De blanc vêtue, ayant au front guirlande ;
D'agnus-castus portant branche à son bras,
Divin symbole ou bien divine offrande ?"
—" Oui, je la vois"—"Eh bien, donc en ce cas,
Sachez que c'est Diane la déesse
De chasteté,—Non loin d'elle se presse

Brillant essaim de vierges, c'est sa cour.
Voyez, ceux là portant une couronne
De vert laurier, ils sont renommés pour
Nobles hauts faits. La gloire qui rayonne
Sur leurs beaux fronts a tout l'éclat du jour ;
Et le narré de leur vaillante épée
De merveilleux serait une épopée.

Voyez plus loin ceux qui portent au front
De chevrefeuille une fraîche couronne,
Onc à l'amour ne firent un affront,
Mais tous ayant constance pour patronne
Aux vœux d'amour onc ne firent faux-bond ;
Et dût leur cœur être noir de tristesse
N'auraient jamais renié leur maîtresse."

Now, fair Madam ! quod I, yet woud I pray
Your ladiship [if that it mightin be]
That I might knowe by some manir of wey,
Sithin that it hath likid your beaute
The trouth of these ladies for to tell me,
What that these knightis be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and were the Flour,

And why that some did rev'rence to the tre,
And some unto the plot of flouris fair?
With right gode will, my doughtir fair! quod she,
Sith your desire is gode and debonaire:
Tho nine crounid be very exemplaire
Of all honour longing to chivalry,
And those certain be clept The Nine Worthy

Which that ye may se riding all before,
That in ther time did many' a noble dede,
And for ther worthiness full oft have bore
The crown of laurir levis on ther hede,
As ye may in your oldè bokis rede,
And how that he that was a conqueror
Had by laurir alwey his most honour:

" Ma belle dame, est-ce trop abuser
De vos bontés, maintenant que lui dis-je,
Que vous prier particulariser
A mon esprit quel il est le prestige
Qui tous ces preux semble apothéoser ?
Que sont-ils donc ces preux en riche armure ?
Que sont-ils donc ceux là qui d'aventure

Portant la fleur sont habillés de vert ?
Pourquoi des uns à l'arbre un pur hommage ?
Et les seconds, pourquoi tous de concert
Devant la fleur cet acte de servage ?"—
" De très grand cœur, vais mettre à découvert
Tous ces secrets devant vos yeux, ma belle,"
Reprit la dame, " or, oyez," me dit-elle :

" Ces couronnés sont les neuf plus fameux
En tous honneurs de la chevalerie,
Les *mieux faisants* est leur nom glorieux,
Ce sont les Preux . . . . les Preux de la Pairie ;
Vous pourrez lire en vieux bouquins poudreux
Qu'en maints tournois obtinrent la victoire,
Et qu'un laurier fut le prix de leur gloire.

And tho that barin bowis in ther hond
Of the precious laurir so notable
Be such as were [I woll ye undirstond]
Most noble Knightis of The Round Table,
And eke the Douseperis honourable,
Which they bere in the sign of victory,
As witness of ther dedis mightily:

Eke there be Knightis old of the Gartir,
That in ther timis did right worthily,
And the honour they did to the laurir
Is for by it they have ther laud wholly,
Ther triumph eke and martial glory,
Which unto them is more perfite riches
Than any wight imagin can or gesse;

For one Lefe givin of that noble tre
To any wight that hath done worthily
[An it be done so as it ought to be]
Is more honour than any thing erthly,
Witness of Rome, that foundir was truly
Of all knighthode and dedis marvelous,
Record I take of Titus Livius.

Ces autres preux portant branches en main
De vert laurier, cet insigne du monde,
Sont méritants, comme, comprenez bien,
L'étaient jadis, ceux de la Table Ronde ;
Car le laurier c'est l'emblême certain
Et de hauts faits et de nobles prouesses,
De bon renom qui vaut mieux que richesses.

Il est aussi quelques vieux chevaliers
De l'ordre ancien nommé la Jarretière,
Qui chevauchant sur leurs nobles coursiers
Ont, eux aussi, dans leur ardeur guerrière,
Et maintefois, cueilli nombreux lauriers.
Le rameau vert témoigne de la gloire
Par eux acquise en plus d'une victoire.

Car pour celui qui combat crânement,
N'existe point plus noble récompense
Qu'un vert laurier donné bien simplement
Par la beauté pour prix de la vaillance :
A Rome aussi c'était là l'ornement
De tout héros, Tite-Live dit comme
De la valeur était bon juge Rome !

And as for her that crounid is in grene,
It is Flora, of these flouris goddesse,
And all that here on her awaiting bene
It are such folk that lovid idlenesse,
And not delite in no kind besinesse
But for to hunt, and hawke, and pley in medes,
And many othir such like idle dedes.

And for the grete delite and the plesaunce
They have to the Flour, and so reverently
They unto it doin such obeisaunce,
As ye may se. Now, fair Madame! quod I,
[If I durst ask] what is the cause and why
That knightis have the ensigne of honour
Rathir by the Lefè than by the Flour?

Sothly, doughtir, quod she, this is the trouth,
For knightes evir shoud be persevering
To seke honour without feintise or slouth,
Fro wele to bettir in all manir thing,
In sign of which with levis ay lasting
They be rewardid aftir ther degre,
Whose lusty grene may not appairid be,

Et maintenant celle que tout là bas
Vous pouvez voir, c'est Flore, la déesse
Des fleurs ; et ceux qui l'entourent hélas !
Sont gens oisifs pour lesquels la paresse
A, voyez-vous, de fort nombreux appas.
Chasser au courre, au faucon, dans la plaine,
Ou bien encor courir la pretentaine

Voilà leur vie ; et pour le grand plaisir
Que dans la fleur ils ont, de leur hommage
Lui font tribut."—" Mais dis-je, à mon desir
Pouvez-vous bien donner votre suffrage ?
Desirerais savoir et définir
Pourquoi l'honneur chevalier le recueille
Non par la fleur, mais bien de par la feuille ?"

" Oyez, ma fille, oyez, voici pourquoi :
C'est que toujours chevaliers doivent être
Des poursuivants et d'honneur et de foi
Sans nul loisir, toujours prêts à paraître
Pour la vertu dans maint et maint tournoi.
Aussi, ma fille, ont-ils pour récompense
De leur valeur, de leurs beaux coups de lance

But ay keping ther beauty fresh and grene,
For ther n'is no storme that may them deface,
Ne hail nor snowe, ne wind nor frostis kene,
Wherfore they have this propirty and grace;
And for the Flour within a litil space
Wollin be lost, so simple of nature
They be that they no grevaunce may endure:

And every storme woll blowe them sone away,
Ne they lastè not but for a seson,
That is the cause [the very trouth to say]
That they may not by no way of reson
Be put to no such occupacion.
Madame, quod I, with all mine whole servise
I thank you now in my most humble wise;

For now I am ascertain'd thoroughly
Of every thing I desirid to knowe.
I am right glad that I have said, sothly,
Ought to your plesure, (if ye will me trow.)
Quod she ayen. But to whom do ye owe
Your service, and which wollin ye honour
[Pray tell me] this year, the Lefe or the Flour?

Le vert laurier qui garde sa beauté,
Le vert laurier qui ne craint pas l'orage,
Le vert laurier qui l'hiver, qui l'été,
Conserve pur son reluisant feuillage :
Voilà pourquoi, ma fille, en vérité,
Cette faveur est donnée à la feuille.
Quant à la fleur celui là qui la cueille

La voit flétrie en un bien court délai ;
Elle ne peut endurer nul dommage,
Un rien la tue, elle ne voit qu'un mai,
Et ne saurait résister à l'orage :
Voilà pourquoi ne saurait pas, là, vrai,
D'un sort durable être jamais l'emblème,
Et de valeur récompense suprême."—

Ores merci, fis-je avec grand respect :
Dès ce moment comprends, ô noble Dame !
Ce que d'abord et du premier aspect
Ne comprenais, sur ma foi le proclame :"—
" Moult ai plaisir, dit d'un air circonspect
La noble dame, avoir fait quelque chose
Qui peut vous plaire ;—Et maintenant pour cause,

Madam, quod I, although I lest worthy,
Unto the Lefe I ow mine observaunce.
That is, quod she, right well done certainly,
And I pray God to honour your advaunce,
And kepe you fro the wickid remembraunce
Of Malèbouch and all his cruiltie,
And all that gode and well-condition'd be;

For here I may no lengir now abide,
But I must follow the grete company
That ye may se yondir before you ride;
And forthwith as I couth most humily
I toke my leve of her, and she gan hie
Aftir them as fast as evir she might,
And I drow homeward, for it was nigh night,

And put all that I had sene in writing,
Undir support of them that lust it rede.
O little boke! thou art so unconning,
How darst thou put thy self in prees for drede?
It is wondir that thou wexist not rede,
Sith that thou wost full lite who shall behold
Thy rude langage full boystously unfold.

Puis-je savoir qui la feuille ou la fleur
De vous aura dorénavant hommage ?"
" La feuille, dis-je, a les vœux de mon cœur,
Quoique peu digne il soit d'un tel servage."—
" C'est fort bien dit : Dieu vous garde, d'honneur,
Et des méchants, et de la calomnie,
Et sur vous plane à jamais son génie !

Ne puis ici rester un plus long temps,
Car il me faut suivre la compagnie
Que vous voyez là bas à travers champs,
Car c'est pour moi vraiment une mégnie :
Lors pris congé d'elle, et sans contretemps
La vis soudain presser sa haquenée,
Et moi rentrai chez moi, car la journée

Déjà touchait aux portes de la nuit.
Et par écrit mis sous le patronage
De mes lecteurs ce qui précède et suit :
O petit livre, à tel aréopage
Oses-tu bien dans ton triste déduit
Te faire voir, et sans rougir de honte
Toi si petit, affronter un mécompte !

LA FLEUR ET LA FEUILLE.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

ON THE

FIRST EDITION, PUBLISHED IN 1854.

THE resonant and delicately finished French language would seem to be a very unfit and inappropriate medium for the conveyance of the grim melody and stern aptness of our old Chaucer—the Nestor of English Poetry—so grave and quaint, so sonorous and stately. Yet here we have a translation of "The Floure and the Leafe," so exquisitely accurate, so classically precise, as to form an epoch in the history of translation. There is a perfect apprehension of the spirit, the *morale* of Chaucer's poem, united to a delicate perception of the *epithetic* peculiarities of the quaint old philosopher. The little volume is deeply interesting to the technical taste of the curious in literature, and fascinating to a poetical mind. The masculine strength, the almost brusque energy of the grand old master finds a softened, melodized, but not enervated echo in this beautiful and artistic refrain. The execution of the design has all the minute beauty of some rare cabinet picture.—*British Army Dispatch* (*December* 29, 1854).

Who will doubt the completeness of the *entente cordiale*, when old Chaucer's Poem of the Flower and the Leaf is translated into French verse? Our French friends are determined that the alliance shall be established upon a firm basis, and so set about understanding us, and direct their inquiries through the literature in which we are self-developed, even up to Chaucer. The earnest good spirit of the Chevalier de Chatelain will be appreciated in England; and we must add, that he has accomplished his task not only gracefully, but with a clear perception of the spirit and meaning of the father of English poetry.—*The News of the World* (*December* 31, 1854).

The admirers of our charming old poet will look with curiosity upon this novel literary labour, and the Frenchman desirous of making full acquaintance with our literature, or seeking to commune with a great spirit of a past time, will consult the pages with profit.—*The Court Journal* (*January* 6, 1855.)

The Chevalier has undertaken a difficult task, and has proved by the execution of it that he has not estimated his powers too highly. The poetry of Chaucer, even a native of

the country has a difficulty in understanding, and the Frenchman must, indeed, be naturalized in language as well as by law, who could attempt the translation of one of Chaucer's poems. The Chevalier de Chatelain has, however, preserved the spirit of the original "Floure and Leafe" with admirable fidelity and grace.—*The Britannia* (*January* 6, 1855).

The Chevalier de Chatelain has translated into French, with singular felicity, Gay's Fables, Charles Swain's poem of "The Mind," and many other pieces of modern authors. He has tried his hand at rendering some of the Scotch poetry of Burns into French verse; and now he applies himself to make the French reader acquainted with one of the most agreeable pieces of our oldest poet, whose thoughts are clothed in language which many English readers of the present day cannot understand without some practice. This elegant literary task the Chevalier has executed with an ability which shows the fitness of his qualifications for a work he is preparing for publication, entitled "Beautés de la Poësie Anglaise," which will comprise translations from more than two hundred English writers.—*The Era* (*January* 7, 1855).

The Chevalier begins to take a high place as a Minstrel, and ought to favour us with an original work; but in the meantime we are only too happy to possess anything so charming as the translation before us. This translation is in the same measure as the original, and yet exhibits all the facility of J. B. Rousseau.—*The Lady's Newspaper* (*January* 13, 1855).

The Chevalier must be an exceedingly erudite English scholar to be able to translate into French verse Chaucer's crude and almost obsolete vernacular. Very few of ourselves understand the "harsh Runic" of the fourteenth century, so Chaucer's language is as obscure to us moderns as that of *Le Roman de la Rose*, or of Rabelais is to the mass of Frenchmen. M. de Chatelain understands, however, the Gothic of the father of English poetry, and has proved that he does by a very accurate transcript of it into the quaint language and metre of Lafontaine. Chaucer's text is printed on one page, and on the other opposite is the Chevalier's pretty translation. The little book will afford a good exercise for Englishmen who comprehend modern French, but are not versed in the idiom that succeeded *les langues d'oc et d'oil*. The translation is creditable to the scholarship and poetic taste of Le Chevalier de Chatelain, who is blessed with such a gentle spouse, that they are destined to be the recipients of the second Dunmow flitch of bacon awarded by Mr. Harrison Ainsworth.—*Bell's Life in London* (*January* 14, 1855).

It should be mentioned here, that the Chevalier de Chatelain has made an attempt to introduce our Chaucer to his countrymen, by publishing a translation of *The Flower and the Leaf*, with the English text in juxtaposition. If this should meet with the success it deserves, the Chevalier will next perform the same good office for *The Canterbury Tales.* —*Chambers's Journal* (*January 27*, 1855).

A singularly accurate translation, embracing the thought and embodying the spirit of the great English poet.—*The Monthly Home Review* (*February* 1, 1855).

The pressure upon our columns for several weeks past has precluded the possibility of our noticing till to-day this very charming translation of Chaucer's "Floure and the Leafe," into elegant French verse. Some months ago we had occasion to notice the translation of Gay's Fables into the French language, by the same gentleman, a task which was performed to perfection. Difficult as it was to give Gay a French face, it is still more so to turn the quaint fancies of the father of English poesie into that language; yet M. de Chatelain has been equally successful, and even more exact than in his first effort to make his countrymen know that there are elegancies in the English tongue, harsh as it is in pronunciation, and difficult for a foreigner to master. Happily, France and England have at last begun to understand each other. The peace of forty years has just terminated in a warm-hearted alliance, and nothing can tend more effectually to confirm that grand achievement than to make our illustrious neighbours understand the peculiarities of our poetic literature. Such an end will be very much advanced by the appearance of this volume, which is as creditable to the translator's talent, as it is to his good feeling. Chaucer in French is indeed a curiosity, but whoever reads him page by page with the original in this version will find that the spirit is beautifully preserved, and that the metre is as exact as could by any possibility be produced.—*Bell's Weekly Messenger* (*February* 10, 1855).

The translator has very wisely attempted to catch the spirit of the original, in preference to a literal rendering, and has succeeded very well in his task.—*The Atlas* (*February* 10, 1855).

It is printed rather appropriately, in the olden style of type, with decorated initials, and forms a very neat little volume.—*Birkenhead Guardian* (*February* 10, 1855).

A free and elegant translation of Master Geoffrey's well known tale; and evincing that true poetic genius we have long known M. de Chatelain to possess.—*The Essex and West Suffolk Gazette* (*February* 16, 1855).

This metrical version of "The Flower and the Leaf," shows that the Chevalier is an apt and elegant interpreter of the father of English poetry.—*The Weekly Times* (*February* 18, 1855).

Turned into French with a bold hand and much poetical taste.—*The Chelmsford Chronicle* (*March* 2, 1855).

The Chevalier de Chatelain, who here presents us with Chaucer's poem of "The Flower and the Leaf" in French, and with the English on the opposite page, is well known for his elegant rendering of Gay's Fables, which our teachers of the French language have found so useful a text book for schools. The learned translator understands and appreciates the peculiarities and the force of the English language, and secures a favourable introduction for English poetry to our continental neighbours by presenting it in a becoming French translation, in which much of the rhythm and point of the original is preserved. To our own countrymen studying the French language—and to those who move at all in the world, its acquirement is a necessity as urgent as reading and writing—the translations of the Chevalier de Chatelain will be pleasing and useful. The small work before us is not the least difficult of those which a translator attempts to render into another language. There are comparatively few amongst our own countrymen who can read and appreciate the full meaning of Chaucer in his quaint idioms and versification, and to render anything approaching to a remembrance in another language would increase the difficulty a hundred fold. Yet the Chevalier is wonderfully successful in his efforts, and much of the spirit of the original is preserved in his French translation.—*The Bridgewater Times* (*March* 29, 1855).

This is a clever production. Its author has attempted, and with much success, the formidable task of rendering into the French language one of the purest and sweetest of the productions of Chaucer,—his poem of *The Flower and the Leaf*. The difficulty of translating poetry is at all times great: the subtle beauties of structure which constitute half its beauty evaporate in the process of transmutation, and the student confused between his endeavours to be literal and his desire to preserve the spirit of his original, is too often tempted to give up the exercise in despair.

When to the ordinary obstacles is added that of the poem to be translated from English, requiring first to be rendered into the current English of the day, the work becomes proportionately discouraging. This is the case with M. Chatelain's undertaking. We are quite aware that the language of Chaucer is not anything like so barbarous as the folly of

many of his editors in insisting upon retaining his barbarous orthography has led many to believe; we can also understand that to a foreigner conversant with Norman French some difficulties may be smoothed away; still enough remain to warrant us in pronouncing this production highly creditable to its author's talent and enterprise.—*Oxford University Herald* (*March* 31, 1855).

A very clever translation of Chaucer's "Floure and the Leafe."—*The English Journal of Education* (*April*, 1855).

The accomplished Frenchman who has just put Chaucer's dainty poem, "*The Floure and the Leafe*," into a Gallic dress, is profoundly acquainted with our language as well as his own. It is matter of just surprise that a foreigner should have thoroughly mastered the antiquated orthography, the obsolete words, the quaint conceits, which characterize the productions of the ancient father of English poetry. . .

. . . . . .

The translator has succeeded in his undertaking *à merveille*.—*The Bath and Cheltenham Gazette* (*April* 18, 1855).

It is printed in quaint old fashioned type, and is quite a gem in its way.—*The Cheltenham Examiner* (*April* 18, 1855).

The Chevalier de Chatelain, who has already translated Gay's Fables, Tupper's Ballads, and other favourite works into the language of sunny France, has now done the same with respect to Chaucer's poem of "The Flower and the Leaf;" and the result of the Chevalier's labours in this instance has been equally successful with his former efforts.—*Cheltenham Journal* (*April* 21, 1855).

Our old acquaintance, the venerable Geoffrey, appears before us in a new suit of entire French manufacture, and we must confess that if he has not improved by the transmogrification, he has at least added the charm of novelty to his native attractions. M. de Chatelain is evidently an ardent votary of the muses, and offers his devotions at their shrine with his whole heart; consequently his voluminous productions are more than usually attractive from their earnestness. Many of our readers will doubtless appreciate the merit of this translation of our oldest English poet, and we recommend it to their perusal.—*Bell's News* (*December* 1, 1855).

It is truly wonderful how M. de Chatelain has conquered the difficulties of that "well of English undefiled," "the morning starre of English poesy"—Chaucer.—*Birmingham Daily Press* (*August* 27, 1856).

This is a beautiful little volume, printed in the antique style, containing a very good translation into the French language of Chaucer's sweet little poem, "The Flower and the Leaf." The great advantage to English students of French, or French students of English, is that the original is on the opposite page to the translation. The book is got up very neatly, and speaks well for the learning, care, industry, and taste of the well-known author of the translation.—(*The Bristol Advertiser, January* 26, 1856.)

We had almost begun to fancy Chaucer a sealed book to foreigners, and very nearly so to not a few natives. The Chevalier de Chatelain has read Chaucer to some purpose. He has drunk a deep draught from the very fountain of English literature—the well of Saxon undefiled—and given its beauties to his compatriots with wonderful fidelity. Bibliomaniacs will be gratified at the typography—a facsimile of the Louis Quatorze style: and the parallel pages of English and French render it an admirable study for the acquisition of either idiom!—*The Northern Times* (*November* 29, 1856).

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Yonge, N. B.
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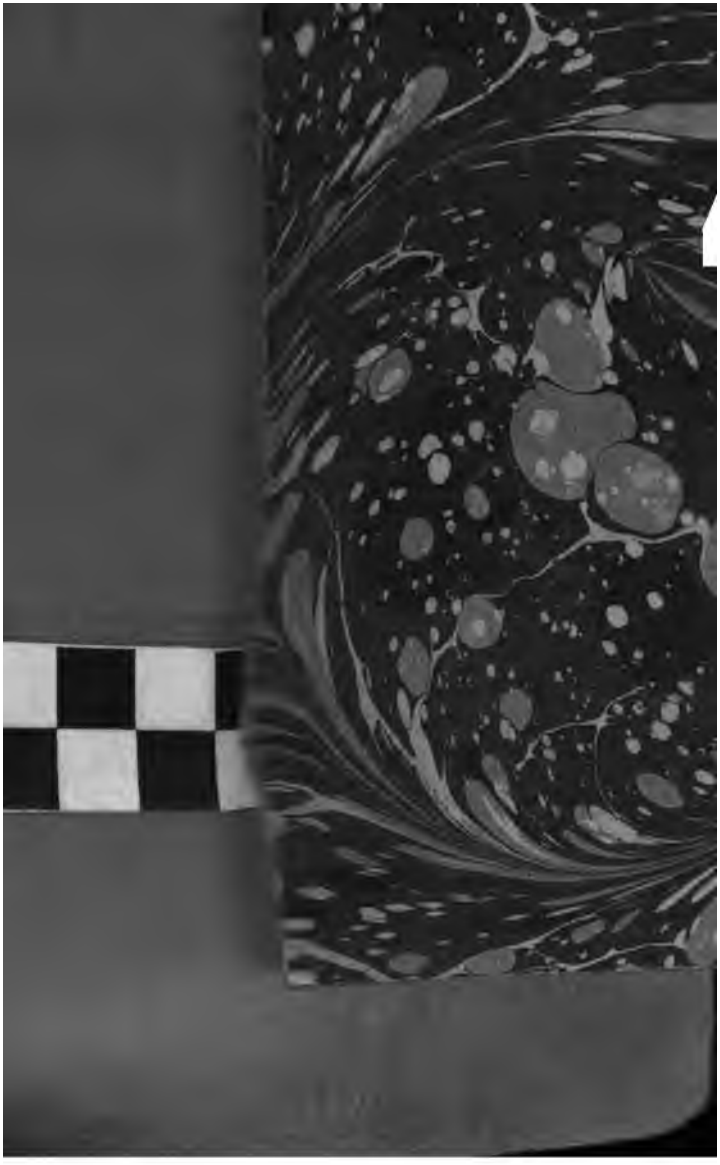
LES BEAUTES DE LA POESIE ANGLAISE,

FORMERONT DEUX FORT VOLUMES,

AVEC TEXTE EN REGARD.

On souscrit à *Londres*, chez Basil M. Pickering, 196, Piccadilly, (W.) next St. James's Church, où l'on s'inscrit d'avance, ainsi que chez le Chevalier de Chatelain, No. 27, Grafton Place, Euston Square (N.W.); à *Paris*, chez Frank, No. 67, Rue Richelieu; et à *New York*, chez H. Baillière, No. 290, Broadway.

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